

Specification

Novelty Plush Stuffed Toy / Utility Case

5 Background of the Invention

The present invention is directed toward the addition of utility to stuffed or plush toys as well as broadening the scope of market for existing utility and storage items. The most basic toy is represented by the stuffed or plush category. This toy category consists of a wide range of representations such as animals, insects, foods, tools and anything else recognizable by the user. The item may be an accurate representation or a characterization designed to enhance the appearance, thus providing entertainment value. These characteristics are well known.

This toy group, although typically associated with children, is embraced at a more advanced age level due to commonly accepted definitions of style and collectability. These characteristics are also well known.

Children and people of all ages are placing additional value on functionality. Changes in day-to-day life in terms of how we entertain ourselves, how we move about freely and how we carry things of importance with us have lead to the creation of many utility and storage items. The need to conserve resources and provide economy as well as convenience of function has led to a growing emphasis on value-added enhancements to day-to-day items. The present invention addresses the addition of this functionality to the arena of stuffed or plush items while retaining the characteristics that enable these items to be embraced by a broad range of age groups. This addition of functionality to a classification of item primarily known mostly for aesthetic values opens new markets for the functional items while helping the consumer consolidate wants with needs.

35 Summary of the Invention

The present invention has been developed to overcome the deficiencies of the prior art discussed above. It is the object of

this invention to provide three-dimensional stuffed or plush articles displaying a level of aesthetics pleasing to many age groups.

5 It is a further object of the invention to provide three dimensional stuffed or plush articles designed to allow the inclusion of items providing additional utility such as, but not limited to, CD Sleeves, Photo Sleeves and Paper notes via utilization of a product-holder interface panel.

10 It is a further object of the invention to provide three dimensional stuffed or plush articles designed to allow the inclusion of articles within standardized containing structures, said structures attached to a product-holder interface panel. Said articles may be but are not limited to stationery items, jewelry, and consumable food items.

15 It is a further object of this invention to provide three-dimensional stuffed or plush articles featuring handles for ease of portability.

It is a further object of this invention to provide three-dimensional stuffed or plush articles that are relatively
20 inexpensive to manufacture.

It is a further object of this invention to provide three-dimensional stuffed or plush articles easily differentiated from the simple addition of plush representations to existing items of utility as a decoration.

25 In accordance with the illustrative embodiments, demonstrating features and advantages of the present invention, there is provided a plush or stuffed article designed as a representation of some real item. Said plush or stuffed article will have an identified top, bottom, right, left, front and back
30 side easily identified such as in the instance of an animal head, or said plush or stuffed article may have orientation of sides defined by application of the inventive design. In both cases one side of said article now called the primary side would have attached a secondary assembly of complementary fabric and design,
35 said secondary assembly incorporating the aesthetic values of the aforementioned plush or stuffed article.

The secondary assembly is formed from two items of fabric material hingedly attached at a common point via sewn stitching.

Each of said layers then has attached thereto a second layer of fabric via sewn stitching and sized to form a first pocket on one layer and a second pocket on the other. The hingedly attached fabric layers will be oriented such that when placed in contact and parallel to one another the first and second pockets will come in contact with one another and provide access from the same direction. Said first and second pockets will furthermore be sized to provide secure placement of a product-holder interface panel serving as a generic interface between the secondary assembly and product holders. Furthermore, the hingedly attached secondary assembly will have attached around the circumference of said secondary assembly a closure mechanism such as but not limited to commonly used fabric zippers. Thus the secondary assembly may be rendered accessible or inaccessible via movement of the zipper or other closure assembly. This rendering will be utilized in the inventive stuffed or plush article in ways such as but not limited to the creation of an opening mouth in the instance of a stuffed animal.

The secondary assembly will be sized such as to complement the style and aesthetics of the stuffed or plush article when used in conjunction with said stuffed or plush article. Taking the aesthetics into consideration, there will be a choice of side on the stuffed or plush article, henceforth known as the primary side. On this primary side the secondary assembly will be attached thereto using sewn stitching forming a final assembly of the previously existing plush or stuffed article and the secondary assembly, imparting the functionality of the secondary assembly while adding to or not detracting from the aesthetics of the plush or stuffed article. This final assembly of stuffed or plush article with secondary assembly will be utilized aesthetically in ways such as but not limited to the display of an opening mouth in the instance of a stuffed animal while product holders attached to the product holder interface panel provide storage utility to the heretofore non-utilitarian stuffed or plush item.

Description of the Several Views of the Drawing

For the purpose of illustrating the invention, there is shown in the accompanying drawings one form that is presently preferred; it being understood that the invention is not intended to be limited to the precise arrangements and means shown.

FIG. 1 is a plain view of a plush article in accordance with an embodiment of this invention, said plush article representing a characterization of human lips.

FIG. 2 is a back view of the article of FIG. 1 designated as primary side for the purpose of this embodiment of the inventive plush stuffed toy or utility case.

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of the secondary assembly showing both first and second pockets as well as zipper closure.

FIG. 4 is an elevated frontal view of the secondary assembly shown in Fig. 3 now in a closed position.

FIG. 5 is an elevated frontal view of the relative positions of the plush or stuffed article of FIG. 1 and the closed secondary assembly shown in Fig. 4 prior to final assembly of the two.

FIG. 6 is a view of the plush article shown in FIG. 2 showing the completed assembly of said plush article with closed secondary assembly shown in FIG. 4.

FIG. 7 is a side view of the plush article shown in FIG. 1 showing the completed assembly of said plush article with closed secondary assembly shown in FIG. 4.

FIG. 8 shows the plush article and secondary assembly as described in FIG. 6 and FIG. 7 with the secondary assembly shown in open position.

FIG. 9 is an elevated frontal view of a product-holder interface panel to which elements of functionality are attached.

FIG. 10 is an elevated frontal view of the product-holder interface panel of FIG. 9 inserted into both first and second pockets of secondary assembly shown in FIG. 3 after said secondary assembly has been attached to stuffed or plush article as shown in FIG. 5.

FIG. 11 shows the plush article and secondary assembly of FIG. 8 with the addition of the product-holder interface panel of

FIG. 9, said insert displaying one embodiment of the invention, the attachment of CD storage sleeves to the product-holder interface panel.

Detailed Description of the Invention

Considering FIGS. 1 thru 11 inclusive, there is illustrated in FIG. 1 one singular embodiment of a plush or stuffed article 10 designed to utilize the aesthetic appreciation of a characterization of human lips. This embodiment is representative of a broad category of plush or stuffed toy, categorized by virtue of construction consisting of a soft outer covering composed of sections of cloth sewn together forming pockets then filled with materials of varying compressability and finally joined at common seams and sewn to render the outer surface continuous. A common characteristic of the final form is the ability to deform under pressure in a temporary fashion, reversable when said pressure is released. These characteristics of plush or stuffed articles are subject to such broad interpretations using a wide range of materials and configurations that the specifics concerning the plush or stuffed item cannot be considered a part of this invention, rather the invention must be considered the utilization and means of utilization of secondary items described herein in conjunction with any plush or stuffed item exhibiting these aesthetic values herein described. In similar fashion, the art and craft of sewing as described herein as a method of attachment is so commonplace as to be rendered generic, and as such no attempt will be made to illustrate or define the actual methodology of creating sewn stitching as used to provide closure and attachment between cloth items.

The illustrated and relatively simple embodiment of the invention for purpose of this document has a back side 12 shown in FIG. 2, designated as the primary side for purposes of this illustration.

Fig. 3 shows secondary assembly 14 consisting of two items of fabric material 16 and 18 forming a natural hinge at the sewn juncture 42 of said fabric materials. First pocket 20 and second pocket 22 are manufactured from similar materials as items of fabric material 16 and 18 and attached thereto by sewn stitching at seams 24 and 26, said seam 24 extending around the circumference of fabric material 16 from starting point 30 to ending point 32, the distance between said starting point 30 and ending point 32

described as degrees of a circle, said circle having center point **38** on fabric material **16** and said measurement of degrees on said circle as measured between starting point **30** to ending point **32** measuring between 210 degrees and 220 degrees. Seam **26** in a like fashion extends around the circumference of fabric material **18** from starting point **34** to ending point **36**, the distance between said starting point **34** and ending point **36** described as degrees of a circle, said circle having center point **40** on fabric material **18** and said measurement of degrees on said circle as measured between starting point **34** to ending point **36** measuring between 210 degrees and 220 degrees.

First pocket **20** as composed of two flexible cloth panels in superposed relation forms a first opening **48** and second pocket **22** as composed of two flexible cloth panels in superposed relation forms a first opening **50**.

Zipper closure **28** is shown as the preferred closure mechanism sewn with one mating half **28A** sewn to item of fabric material **16** and the other mating half **28B** sewn to item of fabric material **18**, thus serving as a closing and securing mechanism. Further demonstrating the quality of two mating halves hingedly attached and the ability of said mating halves to provide a closed or open configuration, the secondary assembly **14** shown in FIG. **3** is shown in a closed and secured view in FIG. **4** wherein item of fabric material **16** has been brought into contact with item of fabric material **18** and secured using zipper closure **28**.

At this time there is described a carrying handle **44** as shown in FIG. **1**, FIG. **2** and FIG. **4**. Said carrying handle is provided as a convenience feature and serves to render the embodiment of the invention shown as portable. Said carrying handle is shown as an attachment via sewn stitching to the secondary assembly **14** shown in FIG. **3** and FIG. **4** but in another embodiment of the invention may be attached to the actual stuffed or plush article being utilized rather than to secondary assembly **14**.

Having now provided stuffed or plush article **10** as shown in FIG. **1** and secondary assembly **14** as shown in FIG. **4**, the joining of the two said items is shown in FIG. **5**. The back side **46** of item of fabric material **16**, itself forming a part of secondary assembly

14 is brought in contact with the back side 12 of stuffed or plush article 10 previously illustrated in FIG. 2. The two articles 10 and 14 are then joined via sewn stitching around the circumference of item of fabric material 16 along seam 62.

5 Having taken care in the design, manufacture and aesthetic qualities of secondary assembly 14, the completed article 64 formed by said secondary assembly 14 described in FIG. 4 and stuffed or plush item 10 described in FIG. 1 is shown in FIG. 6 and FIG. 7, said FIG. 6 showing the completed article 64 from the back
10 for purposes of noting the relative placement of secondary assembly 14 to stuffed or plush item 10 and said FIG. 7 showing the completed article 64 from the side, again noting the relative placement of secondary assembly 14 to stuffed or plush item 10. In general, the characteristic of secondary assembly 14 should be
15 either to render it subordinate to stuffed or plush item 10 in size and placement as shown in this embodiment of the invention 64 or in the case of an embodiment employing a face the secondary assembly 14 may be characterized as a mouth by virtue of the ability to hingedly mimic the opening and closing of said mouth, this
20 characteristic illustrated as part of the descriptions of FIG. 3 and FIG. 4.

The aforementioned ability to hingedly displace the components of secondary assembly 14 are further demonstrated in FIG. 8, a view of the completed article 64 from the back with
25 secondary assembly 14 in the open position as shown in FIG. 3.

At this time it is noted that first pocket 20 as composed of two flexible cloth panels in superposed relation and second pocket 22 as composed of two flexible cloth panels in superposed relation when manipulated in this open position shown in FIG. 8 now
30 form equal and opposing first openings 48 and 50 initially shown in FIG. 3. Said first openings are defined as a size meant to allow the insertion of product-holder interface panel 52 pictured in FIG. 9. Said product-holder interface panel 52 in this preferred embodiment is manufactured from thermoplastic material
35 approximately .035 inches in thickness consisting of first end 54, second end 56 and center spine 58 to which may be attached product holder 60 using mechanisms such as but not limited to thermo-adhesive welding techniques. Said product holder 60 is readily

enclosed within the space formed when secondary assembly 14
pictured in FIG. 4 is in the closed position following the
utilization of zipper closure 28 in this preferred embodiment of
the invention. Product holder 60 may be designed as a set of
5 sleeves to hold CD Discs or Photographs. Said product holder 60
may additionally be designed to hold paper notes. Additionally, in
a generic embodiment of said product holder 60 utilizing geometry
specific to the enclosed product it may hold a range of items of
convenience such as but not limited to stationery items, jewelry,
10 and consumable food items.

The completed insertion of product-holder interface panel
52 into first openings 48 and 50 in first and second pockets 20 and
22 is shown in FIG. 10. It is noted that when first end 54 of
product-holder interface panel 52 is inserted into first opening 48
15 and fully inserted into the pocket it is self-located within the
pocket with respect to the seam. It is further noted that when
second end 56 is inserted into first opening 50 it is self-located
within the pocket with respect to the seam and both ends of
product-holder interface panel 52 remain in place within first and
20 second pockets 20 and 22 utilizing a combination of friction
between product-holder interface panel 52 and first and second
pockets 20 and 22. It is further noted that product-holder
interface panel 52 is further held in place in first and second
pockets 20 and 22 because the overall length of product-holder
25 interface panel 52 is designed to be 10% less than the distance
from the distal ends of first and second pockets 20 and 22, shown
in FIG. 10 as the distance between point 66 and point 68. Thus,
for product-holder interface panel 52 to be removed from completed
article 64 as shown in FIG. 10, said product-holder interface panel
30 52 must be deformed via the application of external force such as
to make spine 58 on said product-holder interface panel 52 bend
such that the obtuse angle formed by the bend faces said spine 58,
thus allowing first end 54 and second end 56 of product-holder
interface panel 52 to be removed from primary and secondary pockets
35 20 and 22.

In FIG. 11 the completed article 64 is shown with one
embodiment of the inventive product-holder interface panel 52, with
a set of sleeves 70 to hold CD Discs 72 permanently attached

thereto. Visible in this view is thermo-plastic bond utilized to attach said sleeves **70** to product-holder interface panel **52** at spine **58**.